

NHTSA and NSC: Learn How to Prevent Pediatric Vehicular Heatstroke Deaths

Sharing tips to protect children, prevent tragedies on National Heatstroke Prevention Day

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In recognition of National Heatstroke Prevention Day on July 31, the [National Safety Council](#) and the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) are urging Americans to understand how to prevent pediatric vehicular heatstroke. Already this year, according to press reports, the United States has [lost more than 20 children](#), because they were either left unattended or became trapped inside a hot vehicle.

Owners should keep their vehicles locked at all times when parked to prevent a child from climbing in and becoming trapped, and parents should teach children that vehicles are not a place to play. Never leave a child in a vehicle when running errands, not even for a minute. Rolling down a window does little to keep a vehicle cool, heatstroke deaths have occurred even in vehicles parked in shaded areas.

Bystanders can also play an important role in saving a life – if you see a child alone in a vehicle, call 911 and get help immediately.

Last year, 52 children died inside a hot vehicle, topping the single-year high of 49 set in 2010. Children, in particular, are susceptible to injury and death in hot cars, as their body temperature can rise three to five times faster than that of an adult. Meanwhile, enclosed vehicles can heat up 19 degrees in just 10 minutes, and cracking a window doesn't help.

On average, 38 children under the age of 15 die each year in the U.S. from being in a hot car, and all but three states – Alaska, New Hampshire and Vermont – have experienced at least one death since 1998. Deaths have occurred in every calendar month, including all winter months.

The Council provides free online training titled "[Children in Hot Cars](#)" that contains vital information about pediatric vehicular heatstroke and outlines how distraction and other behaviors can lead to these preventable deaths. In the course, parents and caregivers are advised to stick to a routine to reduce the risk of forgetting a child in a vehicle. Other tips include:

- Keeping car doors locked so children cannot gain access.
- Teaching children that cars are not play areas.
- Placing a purse, briefcase or even a left shoe in the backseat of a vehicle, which can force drivers to look before they lock.

Learn more about vehicular heatstroke prevention at [NHTSA.gov/Heatstroke](https://www.nhtsa.gov/Heatstroke).

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